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LANA C. SEIVERS, Ed.D.
COMMISSIONER

TO: Lana Seivers, Commissioner

THROUGH: Joseph Fisher, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Special Education

FROM: Brenda Bledsoe, Director, Early Childhood Programs
Division of Special Education

DATE: August 9, 2005

RE: Final Report of Part C Financial Task Force

We are pleased to submit the final report of the Part C Financial Task Force. As you will see, the Task Force concurred in 13 recommendations for the Department's consideration. In light of our current fiscal situation and the influx on new children which will be referred to the system in response to IDEA 2004, we need to move quickly to decide what changes should be made in the early intervention program and move for immediate implementation of those changes.

In priority order are the recommendations from the Division that would have the greatest short- and long-term impact on the current fiscal situation:

- Institute a Central Reimbursement Office (recommendation 7) which should assist in utilizing all payment sources to the maximum level and ensure compliance with the "payor of last resort" requirement in the federal statute.
- Institute family cost participation (recommendation 8) including a sliding scale fee and mandatory use of the family's private insurance.
- Initiate discussions with the Department of Commerce and Insurance (recommendation 9) to study possible State insurance legislation to mandate coverage of early intervention services. The task force representation from Insurance was interested in this approach and expressed interest in exploring the concept.
- Each TEIS office should be provided additional funds for a screening coordinator (recommendation 4) to screen the CAPTA and drug children that will be referred. The program will save contract funds by being able to conduct screenings and, as appropriate, participate in comprehensive evaluations, and the activities will occur in a more- timely manner which will help with our current noncompliance issue related to the 45 day time limit.
- The State should develop developmentally appropriate practice guidelines (recommendation 12) to assist IFSP teams, including parents, to appropriate services which will lead to successful outcomes for children and families.

We trust that the work of this Task Force and the resulting recommendations will provide critical information to assist the Department in formulating long-range plans to ensure the viability of the Part C system of services in Tennessee.

Attachment